

AMHERST/LA PAZ CENTRO SISTER CITY COMMITTEE

Minutes

February 4th, 2010

PRESENT: Toby Bobbitt, Liz Etheridge, Nancy Milch, Kathy and Walter Mullin, Mary Santiago, Anne and Ed Stanek, Lydia Vernon-Jones.

TREASURER'S REPORT:

Kathy reported the following:

December 1st: \$9993 in our account

Debits since then have totaled \$3128

\$257: Fundraising Supplies and Wiring Expenses

\$2871: Amount wired in December

Credits have totaled \$3861

\$138: Coffee

\$3723: Fundraising Letter

Total presently in our account is **\$10, 726.20.**

JULIO'S REPORT:

Mary reported that 25 students began their new school year on February 2nd, 2010. Four students graduated from the program in December (Jacer, Marcos, Annabelle and one other) and one dropped out (Allison). This means that there were five who are new to the program this year. At present, we have three students in the 5th year, four students in the 4th year, the majority in the 3rd year and the new students are all in the first year.

Only one of the four students who graduated this past year is presently attending a higher education program and he/she is attending a technical institute.

Julio reports that the tutoring program had been continued throughout last year. It will be restarted once the term gets going.

Julio reports that Juan donated 2000 eucalyptus trees but they are not being planted at this time. While these are fast growing trees they also suck a lot of water from the ground and are considered invasive in many places. It seems that it might be a good idea to research them a little more before introducing them into the area.

Julio had a few suggestions for us:

1. He would like to begin a basic literacy class for adults in La Paz Centro. He will send us a proposal. We are very interested in this.
2. He is requesting \$7 per student for physical education. Mary will follow up on this with a request for more details.
3. He would like us to consider helping to support the graduates in continuing their education. He suggested \$20 per month per student. Once again, we would like to find out more about this topic:
 - a. Would he be able to supervise the use of the money, so that we could be sure that it is being used appropriately?
 - b. Have the students who are not attending college been accepted somewhere, but can't afford to attend?
 - c. What would the total cost of a technical or college education be per year?

We would also like to know what plans Julio has for Field Trips this year.

Julio is still interested in refurbishing and replacing computers. We will send more computers with the 2011 delegation.

Of some interest to those of us who have visited La Paz Centro: Rosario is living and working in Costa Rica as she could not earn a living in La Paz Centro. Her son, Noel is back in LPC, studying and working.

Evan Coleman, who had been part of two delegations to LPC while in High School, was back in Nicaragua in January teaching English. He visited his family in LPC.

OTHER BUSINESS

The 2011 Delegation reports that they will be hosting a Burrito Dinner and Salsa Dance at First Congregational Church on Friday, March 19th at 6:30 pm. The cost will be \$10 per adult, \$5 per child and \$25 per family.

We were thrilled to welcome Toby Bobbitt, who may be interested in joining our committee. She spent three weeks in Nicaragua many years ago, speaks fluent Spanish and is interested in rekindling her connections to Nicaragua. We will provide her with some background information to give her more of a sense of what we have done over the years. She would like to attend our next meeting.

We decided that we would like to devote a large portion of our next meeting to discussion of our mission.

The next meeting will be at 7:30 pm, Wednesday, March 17th in the Lower Internal Meeting Room of the Bangs Center.

Respectfully submitted,

Anne Stanek, Chair